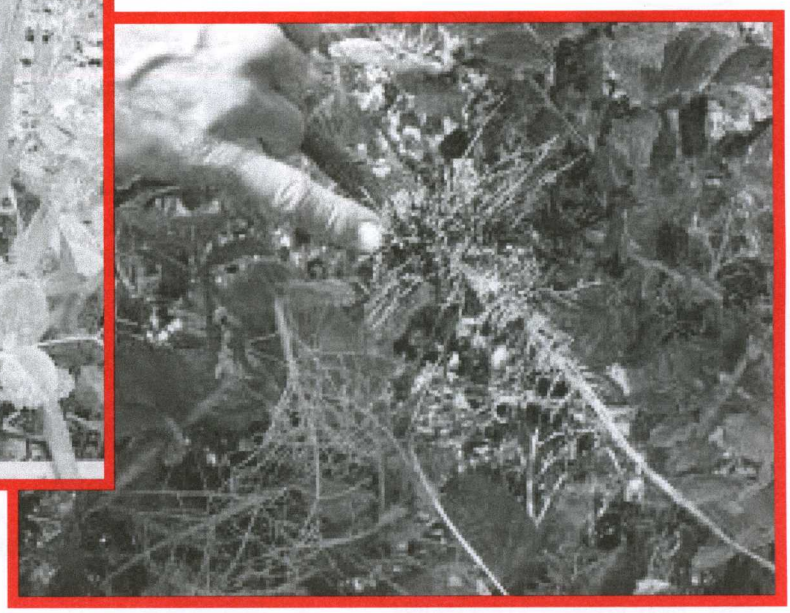
Franklin County Conservation District Newsletter

VOL. 27 NO 3 FALL 2013

Cover Crop Seminar to be held

A growing number of farmers in Missouri have "discovered the cover" – and for some very good reasons. By "cover," we are talking about cover crops. Cover crops are planted because of their benefits, including improving the health and function of soil. This leads to better nutrient cycling, improved water infiltration and more consistent yields over time. Cover crops also suppress weeds, prevent erosion, control diseases and pests as well as help pollinators. Landowners not familiar with how mixtures of cover crops work together might ask, "Why would I want to plant a cover crop that uses up all my water? What cover crop mixture works best in my farming activities?"

Join us on November 6, 2013 from 9 am to 4 pm at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Union to learn more about cover crops. NRCS and University Extension will be presenting and demonstrating cover crop information – soil health, cover crops for forage, nutrient cycling, cover crop species, seeding timeframe/rates, test plot findings and a producer panel. Call the office at 636-583-2303 extension 3 for more information and reserve your seat.



This newletter was published from the 1/10 of 1% sales tax for state parks and soil conservation.

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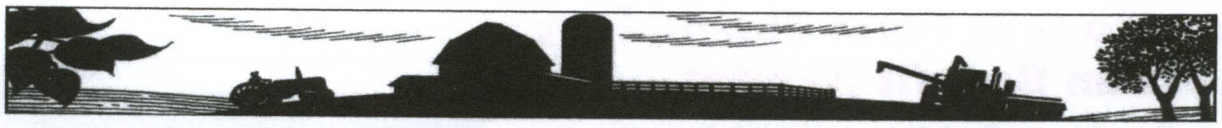


STATE COST SHARE ASSISTANCE

WOODLAND EROSION

Woodland erosion is caused by the removal of soil or vegetation through livestock trampling or improper tree harvesting. In order to protect woodlands and water from the impacts of livestock or recover an already damaged area, you can: plant trees and shrubs; install fence to exclude livestock; ensure that timber harvest operations use proper construction of logging roads and stream crossings; and correct and control gully erosion through proper timber harvest practices. Well-managed woodlands will add beauty, income, diversity, and excellent ground cover for wildlife habitat, reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. All of the Woodland Erosion practices have a 10 year maintenance life span.

FOREST PLANTATION- Converting land to woodland (certain trees do not qualify) reimbursed 75% of computed State Average.

LIVESTOCK EXCLUSION- Excluding livestock from an area to protect plants, soil and water resources; reimbursed 75% of computed State Average.

TIMBER HARVEST PLAN- Harvesting timber according to a management plan; AFTER sales, 20-75 ac = $20/ac, 74+ ac = $1,500 plus $15/ac; $3,000 per farm/landowner/year maximum $9,000.

RESTORE SKID TRAILS, LOGGING ROADS, STREAM CROSSINGS OR LOG LANDINGS- Controlling erosion where improper harvest was done; max $1,500 per gully and max $6,000 per landowner.

If you have any question, concerns or would like a field visit to help you address your farm's conservation future, please call the office.

BRIDGE COST SHARE LOAN PROGRAM
OFFERED BY MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority (MASBDA)

PURPOSE: The Bridge Cost Share Loan Program is a voluntary financial assistance program designed to provide short term loans to those producers who will purchase, erect, or implement an approved NRCS and/or Soil and Water conservation practice.

LIMITATIONS: Loan amount cannot exceed the reimbursement amount on the NRCS contract and Assignment of Payment or the executed SWCP contract.

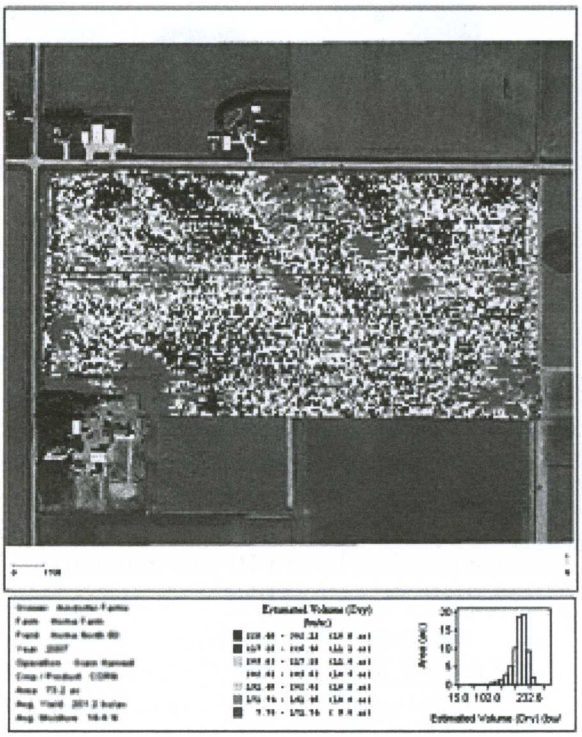
LOAN AMOUNT AND TERMS: The loan interest rate shall be 5.9% fixed. The terms of the loan shall be from the date the loan is made until payment is received by the MASBDA. The interest is due and payable monthly during the terms of the loan.

APPLICATION: Located in the NRCS/SWCD office.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority (MASBDA)
PO Box 630
1616 Missouri Blvd.
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0630
Phone # 573-751-2129
Email – masbda@mda.mo.gov

Innovations in Farm Technology Can Benefit Habitat

By Ryan Diener, Quail Forever Wildlife Biologist



With the fast paced step ups in technology today, it was inevitable that it would eventually reach the agricultural industry. GPS systems are something that most outdoorsmen and women are quite familiar with now. That technology has spread over the past decade and has led to GPS systems in vehicles and even our phones. On the farm, GPS monitored auto-steer programs have been popularized as well. Taking that technology one step further and combing it with yield monitors on our harvesting equipment has led to the ability to accurately map the crop yields off of every inch of a field. What does this mean and how can it possibly help habitat?

Knowing what kind of yield you are getting off of a field and whether or not that yield pattern is consistent can help influence crop management decisions. If you have physical evidence in your hands that shows certain areas of a field where your inputs are higher than your gains it can help pinpoint areas that could be planted back to native grasses and forbs for wildlife purposes. In most cases these areas can be put into continuous CRP practices that will pay you to keep that grass on those areas for 10-15 years. Thus, increasing your profit on those acres and increasing the bottom line on the farm as a whole. It is a win-win for everyone. By strategically placing wildlife habitat on areas of the farm that can actually help save the producer more money each year it becomes a much more viable application in the agricultural business. Wildlife and agriculture go hand in hand, and any circumstance where we can do better things for wildlife while ensuring the economic sustainability of our farms is something we should all be striving for in the wildlife business and as producers.

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636-583-2303 • 1-800-583-3584

The Franklin County Conservation District was organized in 1944 with a primary objective to solve soil and water conservation problems. The District, upon request, aids in planning and applying appropriate land use and conservation treatment measures.

OFFICE STAFF PERSONNEL

Lori Nowak, District Clerk, FCSWCD
Stephen Sparks, District Technician, FCSWCD

Rhonda Davault, District Conservationist, NRCS
Kervin Bryant, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Jerry Busch, Area Soil Technician, NRCS

Lia Heppermann, Private Land Conservationist, MDC
Ryan Diener, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Farmers Rediscover Cover: Old Practice Taking Root With New Pioneers

COLUMBIA, MO – It's something old and something new. It's something borrowed and something...well, green.

Cover cropping, a traditional conservation practice considered old-fashioned by many in modern agriculture, is being "borrowed" and used in new ways by innovative farmers to improve their soil's health, and with it, the health of their businesses' bottom lines.

"Today's agricultural pioneers have figured out how to make cover crops work on their farms with some impressive results," says Jodie Reisner, state conservation agronomist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Columbia. "Innovation is the key to maximizing the effective use of covers. Everyone's situation is different; cover crops aren't a 'one size fits all' practice that can be done the same way on every farm."

Reisner says that while the basic principles of cover crops may stay the same, the best species mixes, establishment methods and termination methods for an agricultural operation can vary widely with respect to objectives, location, weather conditions, crops, soil types, and more.

"Before World War II, most farmers included forage legumes like alfalfa and red clover in crop rotations ahead of nitrogen-demanding crops like corn. Forage grasses and small grains were also commonly used to curb soil erosion," she says.

Over the last five years, interest in cover crops has begun to surge again, driven by many interacting factors, including increasing input costs, cover crop cost-share programs, new GPS-guidance technologies that facilitate new ways of using cover crops, and the arrival of oilseed (tillage) radishes as a novel cover crop with few residue management challenges.

"It's going to take some time and effort for cover crops to make a positive environmental impact beyond individual farms," says Karen Brinkman, acting state conservationist in Missouri. "As more farmers figure out how to effectively plant and manage cover crops, the practice will become more mainstream. Once that happens, the positive impact that cover crops will have on soil health and the environment could be huge."

Through conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, NRCS is working to help farmers adapt those practices to their farms.

"We're ramping up our efforts here in Missouri to ensure that we can assist producers who are interested in implementing systems that improve soil health," Brinkman says. "Cover crop management today isn't just a revisiting of old practices abandoned by the fathers and grandfathers of today's farmers. Innovative, large-scale grain farmers have started integrating cover crops into their production systems in ways that were never even considered before."

Using cover crops in soil health management systems offers a variety of on-farm benefits, including building organic matter, increasing the soil's water-holding capacity, and suppressing pests, diseases and weeds. And the benefits of improved soil health extend beyond the farm.

"Soils that allow good infiltration and have good water-holding capacity reduce runoff that causes flooding. Improved infiltration also keeps nutrients and sediment from being carried off-site into nearby lakes, rivers, and streams," Reisner says.

USDA Natural Recource Conservation Service, April 2013 News Release

Back to Our Original Concern..... Soil Erosion

By Stephen S. Sparks, District Technician

Last year was the Drought that affected the creeks, springs, and ponds to where they were completely dried up, existing wells were sucking air because the water table was below average, crop farmers lost over have their crops due to the lack of water, and hay grounds were so dried up, the slightest spark could catch the whole field on fire. Due to the headache from the drought landowners had to haul water, drill new well, or drill deeper on an existing well, to get water for their livestock or to irrigate their crops or hayfields.

This year Mother Nature has provide enough rain to where the crops and the hay grounds are full of growth and the creeks, springs, and ponds are full of water for livestock to drink from again.

So since the Drought is over, we are back to our original concern which is soil erosion. This rain is causing gullies in the soil since the drought killed most of plants that hold the soil in place and leaving bare dried soil that is easily taken away downstream to our rivers. With most erosion concerns there are ways to keep our soil where we need it most.

Some Examples,

- **Terraces direct the water to stable outlet like a waterway protecting the soil below the terrace from eroding.**
- **Waterways provide a stable outlet for terrace and the thick grass stand traps soil particle that is in the traveling water keeping the soil in field.**
- **Cover crops, after harvesting your crops for the year you could plants cover crops to protect the soil from rain by having good cover over soil along with residue from the recent harvest crop, and letting the roots hold the soil in place and providing some nutrients back into the soil.**

There are other things that could be done to help control the erosion, if you have an erosion concern feel free to contact us here at the Franklin County Soil & Water District Office 636-583-2303.

Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District does not endorse nor recommend any of the vendors/contractors advertised in this newsletter. Any Contractor/vendor that requests to be added to the District's Contractor List can do so.

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Area II - Rockin Horse Farm

Our Area II Outstanding Farmer award goes to Rockin Horse Farm in St. Clair. The original farm was bought in the 80's by Gene and Cheryl Atterberry. Over the years, Gene and Cheryl have purchased additional acreage making the farm over 100 acres.

Gene and Cheryl applied for cost share assistance through the EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentive Program to help install a well, waterlines, tanks and cross fencing in 2006. The practices installed provide a rotational grazing system for the horses. The grazing system has 14 paddocks and RAMM high tensile coated electric wiring so that the horses can see the wire. Food plots and edge feathering were installed to help with wildlife cover and food.

Both Gene and Cheryl work outside the home and still have to find time to work with the horse boarding operation. They like to go on trail rides and play golf. They have 3 children and 3 grandchildren. A large 18 stall barn and indoor riding arena is located on the property. Gene and Cheryl would like to do indoor horse board for their retirement hobby.

Keep up the great conservation work and Congratulations to Rockin Horse Farm!

FRANKLIN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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COMING EVENTS

Monday, September 2, 2013
USDA Service Center closed
Labor Day Holiday

Tuesday, September 10, 2013
SWCD Regular Board Meeting
8:00 a.m., USDA Service Center

Tuesday, October 8, 2013
SWCD Regular Board Meeting
8:00 a.m., USDA Service Center

Monday, October 14, 2013
USDA Service Center closed
Columbus Day Holiday

Monday, November 11, 2013
USDA Service Center closed
Veteran's Day Holiday

Tuesday, November 12, 2013
SWCD Regular Board Meeting
8:00 a.m., USDA Service Center

Call to confirm meeting date and times. All regular meetings are open to the public.

Quarterly Quote

"Each soil has had its own history. Like a river, a mountain, a forest, or any natural thing, its present condition is due to the influences of many things and events of the past."

Charles Kellogg, The Soils That Support Us, 1956

THANK YOU

The District Board appreciates the cooperation of the businesses that advertise in our newsletter and hope that our readers patronize these advertisers. The Board especially appreciates the financial assistance of the Franklin County Commission. Thanks also to our partners in conservation: NRCS, FSA, DNR, University Extension, MDC, Quail Forever. Assistance from the Soil and Water Conservation District is available to all county residents regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, gender identity, reprisal, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation or individual's income. State Cost-Share funds are available for agriculture landowners that have active erosion and are approved to complete practices that solve the erosion problem and for practices that protect our water quality.